

the end" was not the seventh, but the sixth, for the seventh was the "sabbath" beyond history, not within history. But these errors are minor and quite rare; generally, the book's only disappointments are that some particularly interesting subjects—such as the Protestant challenge to Jesuit apocalyptic interpretation or the influential theorizings of James Ussher—are not sufficiently developed.

For the most part, however, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain* is an excellent book, nicely illustrated, well-researched, and conveniently indexed. It is packed with information that is both fascinating in its own right and especially in revealing what concerns the origins of the Protestant interpretations of the apocalyptic works. In fact, although primarily concerned with Reformation historians, Firth's work sheds much light on the apocalyptic outlook in general, raising questions about historical and literal interpretations of Gog and Magog, antichrist, the millennium, the number of the beast, and the time prophecies. The book notes the continued reinterpretation of apocalyptic prophecy within the terms of historical events and thus provides a useful case study against which to study later apocalyptic movements that in a similar way have read prophecy as being most relevant for contemporary conditions.

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Forell, George Wolfgang. *History of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 1. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979. 247 pp. \$12.50.

This volume represents the firstfruit of Forell's projected three-part review of the past in Christian ethics. The author, currently Carver Distinguished Professor of Religion at the University of Iowa, is qualified in systematic theology and philosophy, but in recent years has given special attention to ethics.

Actually the *History of Christian Ethics* is not a systematic and comprehensive history. Instead the reader is treated to a skillfully-drawn sequence of passing vistas: Christian ethics as seen in several individual fathers of the early church, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Augustine, et al. The effect is sometimes reminiscent of the early portion of Beach and Niebuhr's *Christian Ethics: Sources of the Living Tradition* (1955, 1973). Forell, however, provides deeper theological insight, a credit to his outstanding skill in dogmatics.

Beginning with the NT writings themselves, he clearly underlines the power of eschatology, both realized and future, as a mainspring for NT ethics. Forell's balance between the theology of salvation and the role of ethics in the early church is informative to those who tend to depreciate either. One might wish for greater recognition of the pervasive influence of the OT, particularly the prophets, in the NT church.

Forell sees second-century Christian ethics as polarized about creed, canon, and leadership. While recognizing flaws in the logic of their moral-allegorical approach, he continues to use the fathers uncritically, even Ignatius, who is widely considered to be much interpolated.

Chap. 3 sees Tertullian reinterpreted. Forell's approach, more friendly than either Troeltsch or Beach and Niebuhr, rejects Tertullian's centralization of ethics around the anti-idolatry issue, but sees the possibility that Tertullian foresaw a Christianized empire, thanks to the support Christians gave government.

Clement is accurately seen as the bridge for a Christian-Hellenistic dialogue. It would be helpful if Forell had cited specific ways in which Clement aped Stoic and Neo-Platonic ideas.

The treatment of Basil and Chrysostom is especially helpful, as these fathers are less well known in the western tradition. Although little is said of it directly, perceptive readers will easily detect in these fathers antecedents of the later Arminian branch of theology. Forell's volume ends with his treatment of Augustine, where he emphasizes the derivative nature of much of Augustine's thought.

Overall, the book is most helpful to readers already somewhat acquainted with both the fathers and historical theology. Indeed, at times theological ethics virtually excludes applied ethics. It is unfortunate that the publishers elected to follow the increasingly fashionable practice of using endnotes rather than footnotes, something which encumbers the use of an excellent system of references. In small consolation, the notes are gathered at the close of the volume rather than following each chapter. Numerous European secondary works cited in the bibliography will expand the horizon of American readers.

Judged by this first volume, the succeeding two should prove very useful to the reading public, provided the expectation is not for something other than what the author intends.